

## DRAFT #2

### TASK FORCE REVIEW OF 1991 MUSEUM STUDY

The attached document summarizes the CIHC Task Force's (TF) comments about its vision for a new Indian cultural center as of Summer 2003. Because the TF had indicated that the 1991 Museum Study was the starting point for their work, an exercise to review the six areas addressed in the Study was included in a visioning workshop conducted during the May 2003 meeting of the TF. Most of the content of this document comes from that workshop.

This second draft was not formally endorsed by the TF. Individual TF members provided some comments to the first draft, but the preparation of a final version was not pursued. The Purpose and Vision Statements that were developed and adopted by the TF subsequent to the 2003 visioning workshop are the primary guidance from the TF about its vision for the new CIHC.

Some other points to keep in mind in reading or using this document:

- The statements are based on
  - a) Discussion during the TF meetings in March and May
  - b) Conversation between TF members or comments made by TF members on an informal basis
  - c) Discussion or comments made by the proponents of SB 2063 prior to the creation of the Task Force
  - d) Language used in the 1991 Study and other planning documents, including Dr. Bernstein's commentary
- The topics are presented roughly in the order that they appear in the 1991 Study, and not in order of importance.
- Since many of the statements relate to or re-enforce statements made elsewhere in the document, it is necessary to read all of it in order to understand its parts.

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### GENERAL

**Museum vs Cultural Center:** The Task Force (TF) feels strongly that the word "museum" should not be used for the new entity it is helping to create. The 1991 Study documents that many Indian people objected to the term "museum," associating museums with dead things, cultural expropriation, and unwelcome surroundings. Since SB 2063 that established the Task Force uses the term "cultural center and museum," the term "cultural center" or "center" will be used in its discussions.

**Name:** The name given to the TF and the project by SB 2063 -- California Indian Cultural Center and Museum -- was consistent with the recommendation in the planning documents to use the name "California Indian Museum". The TF recognizes a problem with its name in that the subsequent use of the "California Indian Museum" name by another organization has confused its origins. The TF may recommend the adoption of a different name. If so, legislation may be needed to make it official.

### 1. MUSEUM NETWORK AND A STATEWIDE MUSEUM

**Importance of a statewide cultural center:** The TF affirms that there is an important role for a statewide cultural center that can represent and serve all California Indian people. A statewide cultural center can provide a central place and organizational support for Indian people from different areas to come together, learn from and honor each other. It can serve as a contact point for all people -- including school children, families, and scholars -- that want to learn about California Indians. And based on an economy of scale, it can create and maintain high caliber curatorial and research facilities that can be shared with smaller museums and tribes for preservation activities. Moreover, a successful statewide cultural center of high quality can make a compelling statement about the contributions of Indians in the past, present, and future of the State.

**Importance of local museums:** The TF acknowledges that cultural preservation and interpretation is best done in the local area of the people it attempts to represent and support. Local museums allow for more complete participation by tribes in the stories told, can reflect regional characteristics, and can serve its constituents on a frequent basis.

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**California Indian Museum System** : The TF acknowledges that the new statewide cultural center can and should serve as a resource for local Indian museums and tribes. Conversely, it should also draw upon the experience and knowledge of the local museums – particularly the tribal museums – in its own development and operation. This relationship will develop naturally even in absence of the formal structure recommended in the 1991 Museum Study, and can be extended and enhanced over time. As much has changed since 1991, *local museums should be again consulted* about their preferred relationship with the statewide cultural center.

**Priorities for Task Force**: The TF realizes that it cannot attempt everything it might like to do given the limited start-up funds and uncertain financial future, and the wish to have a first-phase of the statewide cultural center completed within a few years. The TF will concentrate on the development of the statewide museum. A highly-structured organization of local museums will not be attempted at this time. However, planning and implementation of the statewide cultural center will include some networking of local museums and leadership in issues of concern to both. Whenever it is possible to conduct its development activities in a way that shares resources and information with local museums, it will do so.

### 2. SITE AND FACILITIES

**Indoor and Outdoor Facilities**: The TF confirms the complement of indoor and outdoor facilities outlined in the 1991 study. These include exhibit areas, theater, lecture hall, store, art studio and gallery, classrooms, curatorial facilities, library, research facilities, exhibit preparation facility, traditional village area, native plant garden, playing fields, traditional meeting area, special events over-night area, and nature trail. Most of the TF felt that all of the facilities and the activities they represent should be located together at one place, so that the meaning of each is enhanced by its relationship to the whole.

**Site Characteristics**: The TF recognizes that a natural environment with a strong "sense of place" is vital for a place that represents California Indians. Although no one site could include the diverse landscapes of California, land with natural features characteristic of one region can represent the strong bond between indigenous people and the lands they inhabit. Proximity to water is particularly important. Separation

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from visual distractions like traffic and buildings is desirable. The presence of cultural features like grinding rocks on the site would also make it more meaningful.

**Building Characteristics:** The TF expects superb design that reflects Indian values. The architecture and site design should evoke respect for the cultures represented and be consistent with a modern image of California Indians. Inspiration should be taken from traditional forms and materials. Design, technology, and materials employed should be safe for the planet and for visitors and staff.

**Size:** The TF envisions facilities of significant size, basically as described in the c.1991 planning documents. The previously recommended size - about 60,000 square feet on about 100 acres – might vary. The actual square footage and acreage required will be confirmed during the Master Planning process.

**Requirements of SB 2063:** The TF acknowledges the direction given by SB 2063 to “site the cultural center within proximity of other cultural and historical facilities” and to “take into consideration the public accessibility of the facility.” Although these directions can be applied broadly to include almost any place in California, there is consensus that a location remote from population centers will not be considered. Also, public transportation to the facility will be considered in site selection.

**Location in California:** Most of the TF prefers a location in the central part of the State in order to equalize travel time from the far north and far south of the State. Some think it is more important that the center be located near a major population center, which suggests a Southern California location.

**State Capitol:** Most of the TF sees value in siting the center in or near Sacramento because it has important advantages as the State Capital: 1) California Indians are accustomed to meeting in the capital city to conduct business of concern to multiple tribes. 2) School groups and families make pilgrimages to the state capital to “learn about the state’s heritage,” and Native American contributions should be included in

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this experience. 3) The visibility of California Indians amongst decision-makers would be enhanced by a significant cultural center nearby.

**Tribal Identity:** The TF acknowledges that any site selected will be in the homeland of one or more California Indian groups. The home tribe(s) should be consulted about the development of the center and their presence acknowledged to visitors. At the same time, it is important that all California Indian tribes feel equally welcome and a part of the new cultural center. It may be a challenge to avoid over-identification with one cultural group or tribe in site selection and in development of working partnerships.

**Neighbors/Partners:** The TF acknowledges that location of the cultural center will determine its neighbors, and will create or limit opportunities for partnerships with other organizations, agencies, and businesses. Some of these partnerships could include sharing of the financial burden of building or operating the center. In some cases, the location itself may also determine what funds are available, as with highway funds. These should be considered when selecting a site.

**Priorities for the Task Force:** The TF is very concerned with the ongoing financial sustainability of the center once established. It recognizes that a seemingly wonderful site might not be economically supportable, and, conversely, that a site with a lot of associated financial support might not be appropriate for the center. The TF is committed to achieving as much of the above-described vision as possible, while considering economic incentives. An economic feasibility study will be conducted prior to making any commitments to a specific site. The TF may recommend a competitive bidding process for site selection.

### 3. ARTIFACTS AND ARCHIVES

**Resource Center:** The TF confirms that an important role for the new Center will be providing access to and safekeeping for Native American cultural objects. It will also serve as a research center with documentary materials and library resources. Some TF members cited the National Museum of the American Indian's Cultural Resource Center as a model.



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**Scope of Collection:** The TF assumes that the Native American collections currently housed at the State Museum Resource Center will become the nucleus of a larger permanent collection at the cultural center. The center will not serve as an archeological repository, and will not house human remains and/or associated funerary objects. The collections shall include contemporary cultural objects. An Acquisition Policy will be developed for approval by the TF or other governing board for the cultural center.

**Collection Management Policies:** The TF is concerned that the management of cultural objects at the cultural center reflect California Indian values as well as museum preservation standards. Collection management policies will be developed in collaboration with Indian cultural specialists for approved by the TF or other governing board for the cultural center. Some TF members feel that individuals will be more willing to donate their objects to the cultural center when they are confident that the objects will be taken care of in a manner acceptable to California Indians.

**Curatorial Facilities:** The TF expects storage and exhibition facilities to meet high standards. This will be especially important in securing loans from foreign museums, so that objects removed from California many years ago can return home – at least for some time. The TF favors “open storage” of artifacts because it removes visual and psychological barriers to access.

**Partners:** The TF anticipates partnerships with other institutions and organizations involved in the preservation of Native American heritage. This makes particular sense for State of California institutions like the State Library, State Archives, University of California, and California State University. The TF's intention is to enhance access to resources at these other institutions, not to duplicate their collections, programs, or services. The cultural center can serve as a first stop for researchers, and a trusted place for California Indians to seek information. The TF will contact each of these institutions about the potential for future collaboration.

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**Object Conservation:** There is need in tribal museums for expertise in object conservation and preservation. The expertise developed and used at the cultural center should be shared with smaller museums in California that preserve and interpret Native American objects. Eventually, the cultural center should be a training center for care of cultural objects.

**Repatriation:** Subsequent to the planning process in the early 1990s, guidelines for implementing federal laws about repatriation of Native American cultural objects have clarified that tribes have control over objects repatriated to them. Any role for the statewide cultural center in the long-term management of repatriated objects would be at the discretion of the tribe(s) with right of possession. The center could be of service to such tribes by offering secure facilities for maintaining cultural objects in cases where the tribes have no facilities of their own.

**Priorities of Task Force:** The cultural resource and research facilities could be attempted before or after exhibition halls, outdoor exhibits, or conference facilities. The National Museum of American Indian established its Cultural Resources Center more than a decade before the large-scale museum for the general public was scheduled to open to visitors.

### 4. INTERPRETIVE THEMES / INTERPRETATION

**Past and Present:** The TF confirms the approach to interpretation that is reflected in the various planning documents to interpret both the history of indigenous people in California and the culture of California Indians today. The theme suggested previously, "A Persevering People," spans the range of the desired subject matter, but puts too much emphasis on hardship. A thematic statement that emphasized the richness and diversity of today's California Indian people would be more desirable.

**California Indian Focus:** The TF is firm that interpretation will focus on Indian groups that are indigenous to the geographic area now defined as California. The cultural heritage of Indians from other parts of the United States or the World that now live in California will be a sub-story about contemporary Indian life. Practically speaking, this

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will mean that exhibits about non-California Indians, and events that are not Californian in origin (such as a Pow wow), will occur only as a portion of a larger schedule emphasizing California Indian culture.

**Indian Perspective:** The TF shares the concerns articulated in the planning documents that the subject matter presented at the center should be from an Indian perspective. This will be especially apparent in an honest treatment of the Gold Rush period. The TF wants a reasonable balance between telling true stories and telling stories that will engage non-Indians in learning about the history of Indians in California.

**Local Tribes:** Because respect for local authority and custom is so important to relationships between California Indian tribes, the TF wants the tribal culture from the area surrounding the center to be recognized in the interpretation. This may result naturally since proximity to the center will encourage greater participation in its programs by local people. Interpretation in outdoor demonstration areas, which could include traditional structures from tribes located far from the center itself, must balance the protocols of local people with the need to interpret all California groups.

**Regional Perspectives:** The TF wants exhibits to reflect the perspectives of Indians from all parts of California. This will mean involving many people from throughout the state in exhibition and program planning and implementation. An exhibit area designated for changing exhibits from individual cultural groups would offer an opportunity for multiple stories to be told over time. In instances where a particular region or tribe is the subject of an exhibit, the story should originate with the people from that area. One possibility is to have several galleries based on bio-regions which would have oversight by tribes from that area.

**Cultures vs Political Organization:** The TF recommends focusing on cultural identities rather than political identities for interpretive exhibits and programming. Participation by tribes and cultural groups that are not federally-recognized will be welcome.



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**Exhibition Galleries:** The 1991 Study calls for at least three exhibit areas: 1) a permanent exhibit gallery that gives an overview for the general visitor and school groups, 2) a temporary exhibit area to house exhibits originating from local California Indian museums or tribes, and 3) a temporary exhibit area to house larger-scale exhibits which could come from a variety of sources, including national or international museums. There would be some provision for display of contemporary art.

**Task Force Priorities:** Except for permanent exhibitions, it may or may not be necessary to have an over-arching interpretive theme for the center. This is something that may come out of the Master Planning process.

### 5. PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

**Multiple Purposes:** The TF supports the kinds of programming and events outlined in the Study. Some programs or events may focus on a specific interest and serve specific stakeholders. However, the center's strength will be the programming that naturally serves multiple purposes and stakeholders. For instance, regularly-scheduled demonstrations by paid traditional basket-weavers for the purpose of educating the general public, would also support California basket-weavers and help perpetuate traditional skills. Another example would be a Big Time that was held at the request of Indian people, and would be attended by the general public.

**Personal Services:** The 1991 Study emphasizes interpretation delivered in-person such as storytelling, nature walks, campfire talks, hands-on demonstrations, and artist-in-residence programs. An educational encounter with a trained and inspiring individual can have a long-lasting effect on a visitor. Participation of California Indians that have first-hand knowledge of the subject is important to the authenticity of this kind of experience.

**Task Force Priorities:** The kinds of programs and events that can and/or should be offered initially, will influence and be influenced by the development phases for the center's facilities. After the site is selected, it will be important to identify some interim public uses.

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### Education

**School Programs:** The TF believes that education of school children (K-12) is one of the most important functions of the new center. The accommodation of large numbers of school groups must be taken into account for both facility design and program planning. Some TF members see a role for the center in development and implementation of K-12 curriculum on Native Americans.

**Past vs Present:** The TF does not wish to support programs described in the Study – such as living history and environmental living programs – that present Indians as costumed characters from the past or suggest that Indian culture can be understood by pretending to live like historic Indians for a period of time. Past practices are an appropriate subject for interpretation, but should be presented from a contemporary point-of-view.

**Internet / Distance Learning:** The internet has created possibilities for programming that were not fully understood at the time the Study was written. Museums now typically use the internet for public information, teaching, and sharing cultural objects which otherwise might remain unknown in storage. Database networks that share research materials of multiple institutions – particularly photographic collections – are becoming an important means of information sharing, and are an efficient way to serve people who live in rural areas. Distance learning which connects classrooms via video link to teachers or specialists in distant locations is another way the center can serve the entire state more equitably. These newer modes of connecting with the public should be developed fully at the center.

**Statewide vs Local:** The center is primarily a statewide institution that has a secondary role in the local community. The primary focus of the center's educational efforts will be the provision of educational opportunities for interested people throughout the State. Never the less, the center will inevitably be patronized by school and community groups that live close by in greater proportion than those who live far away, and these visitors should be accommodated appropriately. Also, there may be occasions when local community outreach is desirable to support local partnerships or increase attendance revenue. The local outreach programs described in the Study will

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be given lower priority for early implementation than other educational efforts. See Internet / Distance Learning above.

### Shared Learning

**Forum for Cultural Heritage:** The TF believes that an important role of the Center is to provide a venue for discussion about cultural matters of importance to California Indians. The actual subject matter can and should vary, but precedence should be given to programs and events that perpetuate cultural traditions, highlight cultural expression, advance understanding and interpretation of Indian culture, and train stewards of cultural resources. Professional meetings, summits, and symposia should be encouraged. A full complement of meeting rooms, lecture hall, and multi-purpose areas at the center will be needed to support this function. Some TF members feel these facilities should precede exhibits in phasing the project.

**Expertise of Many:** Training conducted at the center should draw upon the expertise of many. This would include traditional cultural specialists. In some cases, training programs would be sponsored and taught by the center staff – such as workshops for teachers about how to use the center to support classroom curriculum. In some cases, people from outside the center would provide the expertise and make the presentations – such as a workshop by a tribal museum about how to establish an oral history documentation program. There would also be instances where the center is used by another organization for its own (not public) purposes – such as workshop conducted by an Indian basket-weavers organization for its own members, or a graduate seminar offered by a university. The center – when fully developed – could become an important national resource for training Native American museum professionals.

### Cultural Practices

**Demonstrations:** The center will serve as a venue for tribes and individuals from all California to share traditional practices from their areas with people from elsewhere in the state. This would be of great interest to other California Indians and non-Indian visitors, and would encourage and support the continuance of traditional skills. Some activities could be done indoors, particularly in bad weather. The outdoor areas will be

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particularly well suited for very active demonstrations such as games, fishing, and boating. The demonstration area(s) will be designed in consultation with the leaders of the dance group and singers that would use them. Guidance will also be sought from traditional leaders about appropriate activities, identification of knowledgeable demonstrators, and establishing protocols.

**Private Ceremony:** The TF expects that the center will have areas for tribes to use privately if they wish. This would include a room in or near the curatorial facilities for prayer or blessings involving cultural items from the collections, and an area outside where a ceremony could be restricted to tribal members and last beyond normal open hours for the public. These areas will be designed with the guidance of the traditional leaders that would know the features needed.

**Overnight Accommodations:** The Study emphasized the importance of camping facilities so that tribal people from distant locations could participate fully in the center activities conveniently and inexpensively. Depending on the location of the center, the TF thinks it may be possible to fill this need by making arrangements with an adjacent campground or other economical lodging near the center instead. If so, it would still be necessary to provide for an overnight presence at a ceremony site.

### Celebrations and Recreation

**Celebrations:** The center will provide a venue for California Indians and the general public to gather for special events and celebrations relating to the mission of the center. Priority will be given to events organized by California Indians, such as Big Time, or events that are about California Indians, such as Honored Elders Day that is currently held annually at the State Indian Museum in Sacramento.

**Private Events:** Because of its architectural distinction and quality facilities, the center will be sought for private special events that are not related to the mission of the center. Accommodating such events can expose people who might not visit the center otherwise to its benefits, associate the center with meaningful occasions for the individuals attending, and bring in needed revenue. If attempted, care should be taken

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that private events do not detract from the purpose or mission of the center. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is an example of a museum offering a dramatic setting for private events.

**Park Uses:** The natural features and the special sense of place desired as a setting for the center, will attract people who want to rest and rejuvenate in the beautiful grounds surrounding the buildings. This is an appropriate use and is consistent with the image of the center as a welcoming place to visit. Accommodations for picnics, paths for walking, and benches placed for resting and contemplation should be provided.

### 6. GOVERNANCE / OPERATIONS

**Indian Involvement:** The TF strongly agrees with the Study that California Indian involvement throughout the center -- at the professional, advisory, and volunteer levels -- is essential to its proper functioning. This is important so that California Indians have authority over how their own heritage is interpreted and presented to the public.

**Partnership w California State Parks:** Although the earlier planning documents discuss possible alternatives for supporting the center in State government, SB 2063 determined that it will be administered within the California State Park System. The TF believes that California State Parks has experience and infrastructure that will be useful in establishing the center. However, both the TF and State Park managers agree that the center cannot be operated as a traditional State Park, and that a partnership form of governance with the California Indian community is necessary to the center's success. Such a partnership must ensure that California Indians can influence the direction of the center, possibly through a governing board of tribal representatives. This board may or may not be the same as that for the Foundation. See Foundation below.

**Foundation:** The TF agrees with the 1991 Study and common practice that a non-profit foundation is needed to support the new center. The TF believes the establishment of the foundation is a high priority so that fundraising can commence.



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The foundation may exist solely as a support organization, or may have some responsibilities for governance of the center. See Partnership above. The TF will recommend the means for developing the foundation, and the make-up and selection of its founding board of directors.

**Priorities for the Task Force:** The TF believes the establishment of the foundation is a high priority so that fundraising can commence. Site selection will influence discussion of operations and, possibly, governance. See Neighbors/Partners above. The TF duties are complete once State Parks adopts a governing structure for the completed cultural center.